THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Improvement of Standard of Education

852. SHRI I.D. SWAMI : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether teachers are getting more involved in political activities than imparting education to the students in schools and colleges; and

(b) if so, the steps the Government propose to take to stop this trend and to improve the standard of education in schools, colleges and universities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) There is no empirical evidence that teachers are getting more involved in political activities.

(b) Does not arise.

Petrol and Diesel Outlets in Orissa

853. SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of petrol and diesel retail outlets functioning in Orissa at present;

(b) whether the Government propose to sanction some new petrol and diesel retail outlets for Orissa during 1997-98; and

(c) if so, the places where these are proposed to be located?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) As on 1.4.1997, 354 retail outlets were in operation in Orissa.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The Industry Marketing Plan for new retail outlets is under consideration of the Government.

New Shipping Policy

854. SHRI B.L. SHANKAR : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to newsitems captioned "New Shipping Policy expected in a month" and "Shipping industry faces choppy times" appeared in the *Times of India* dated July 4. 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the salient features of the policy and the time by which it is likely to be announced and implemented; and

(d) to what extent it is likely to mitigate the problems of shipping industry in the country?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Government has constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Director General of Shipping to recommend to the Government a National Shipping Policy on the issues raised by the shipping industry. The Committee is likely to submit its report by end July, 1997.

Accommodation of Bigger Vessels at Paradeep Port

855. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal to deepen the draft of the Paradeep Port to accommodate bigger vessels has been pending since long;

(b) if so, the reasons for the delay;

(c) whether any International company has taken interest in this assignment; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) No, sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Flood Control-cum-Power Projects

856. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the particulars of Flood Control-cum-Power Projects prepared by Brahamaputra Board since its formation and expenditure incurred in such projects preparation;

(b) the present status of those projects including Subansiri, Dehang, Dibang and Tipaimukh;